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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 25 June 1996, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. GERVAIS (Côte d'Ivoire)

later: Mr. MOUBARAK (Lebanon)
(Vice-President)

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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGAINST THE ILLICIT PRODUCTION, SALE, DEMAND, TRAFFIC AND DISTRIBUTION OF NARCOTICS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGAINST THE ILLICIT PRODUCTION, SALE, DEMAND, TRAFFIC AND DISTRIBUTION OF NARCOTICS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES (E/1996/18, E/1996/57)

The PRESIDENT recalled that because of the threat that drugs posed to the world economic order and the internal stability of a number of States the Council had decided to devote its high-level segment to the question of international cooperation against illicit activities related to narcotic drugs. The vast sums diverted into illegal drug trafficking represented capital lost to society because it was not invested in the legitimate sectors of national economies. No social or economic sector remained immune from the effects of drug trafficking. Concerted action was needed to elaborate innovative and coherent strategies, particularly in such areas as money-laundering.

The legal arsenal against illicit trafficking included 14 international instruments and a coordinating body, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP); the latter was of invaluable assistance to developing countries, which did not have sufficient resources to fight illicit trafficking on their own. Therefore, UNDCP must be placed on a sound financial footing.

Countries could demonstrate their commitment to drug control by acceding to the 1988 United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. In drug-producing regions, actions should not be limited to punishment of producers, but should include support for substitute activities. In addition, the industrialized countries could exercise better control over exports of precursor chemicals.

Africa, a region of limited resources where control of national borders was often lax, was becoming a major transit zone. It was not surprising, therefore, that drug consumption in the region was also on the rise. Support from the international community to strengthen drug control and educate youth was needed more than ever before.

The time had come to consider a joint approach by the international community. The Council should consider the proposal for a special session of the General Assembly as well as the review of the Medium-term Plan for the

period 1998-2001. Such meetings could provide an opportunity to strengthen the will of the international community to continue the fight against illicit drugs.

Mr. GIACOMELLI (Executive Director, United Nations International Drug Control Programme) said that, sadly, drugs had become a major cause of insecurity in the world. Fortunately, however, the international community had a number of legal instruments at its disposal that it could use to combat the problem, including the drug control conventions and the Global Programme of Action, as well as the means for their implementation through UNDCP, the coordination mechanism of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and the System-wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control. Since its creation, UNDCP had taken a balanced approach, whereby demand reduction and supply reduction were viewed as inseparable and mutually reinforcing elements. The strategy also emphasized the promotion of comprehensive national drug control plans that were integrated into each country's overall economic and social planning, the development and maintenance of international norms and standards for drug control and the mobilization of civil society for the prevention and reduction of drug abuse.

Because of its multisectoral nature, coherent action in drug control required the establishment, at the national level, of a coordinating mechanism at the highest level. Similarly, at the international level, UNDCP, through the mechanism of ACC, had been able to ensure the increased commitment of specialized agencies and the international financial institutions to provide a system-wide response. It must be recognized, however, that the gap between words and deeds was widening. The Council should therefore confirm the high priority assigned by States to international drug control, both at the national level and within the United Nations, express a firm commitment to carry out concerted multilateral action and identify a system of monitoring and control of performance acceptable to Member States. Such a system should contain precise objectives and deadlines with respect to the universal adherence to the international drug control treaties and their implementation, adoption of national drug control master plans, appropriate mechanisms for internal coordination with the necessary legal and political authority, allocation at the national level of resources proportionate to the dimensions of the problem and allocation of resources to UNDCP commensurate with its mandate.

Given that there were currently no major conflicts or ideological divides to paralyse concerted action, and that the international community was agreed regarding the necessity to address all aspects of the drug problem, it must translate that resolve into action No single country had the solution, and solidarity was not a question of generosity, but rather a matter of survival.

Mr. SCHROEDER (President, International Narcotics Control Board) said that the international drug control conventions of 1961, 1971 and 1988 set forth the minimum control levels and obligations of Governments. In order to be effective, they required universal adherence, proper implementation at the national and international levels, and a dynamic response to drug abuse and illicit trafficking. Each case of non-ratification created loopholes which could be used by those who stood to profit from illicit production and trafficking. Thus, he urged those Governments which had not yet ratified any of the instruments to do so. Recalling that in 1994 the Board had identified a number of provisions that it believed should be amended, he urged Governments to make full use of the simplified amendment procedure provided for that purpose.

Implementation of the Conventions was also far from perfect, and countries needed to strengthen their judicial systems in such areas as extradition, mutual legal assistance, and confiscation of assets and proceeds, if they wished to fight drugs effectively. Although some Western countries criticized others for overly severe punishment of drug-related offences, the Conventions intentionally defined penalties only in very general terms. Every Government was entitled to exercise stronger control measures than those provided in the Conventions if it believed them appropriate and necessary. It must be remembered that the ultimate aim of the Conventions was the well-being of society. The Board took its responsibilities to ensure an adequate supply of drugs for the treatment of pain and other legitimate medical purposes very seriously, but every effort must be made to prevent illicit trafficking and abuse.

Governments should keep in mind that experiments in the field of harm reduction currently taking place in several developed countries could be misused by those advocating the legalization of drugs. In an era of immediate communications networks, however, any activity within one country affected international drug control policy, and, in the view of the Board, legitimization of the non-medical use of drugs of abuse under the rubric of "harm minimization" could not be justified. It was also concerned by the use, misuse and abuse of

psychotropic substances, for example, stimulants, and hoped that the forthcoming conference on stimulants would result in a plan of action outlining effective countermeasures. The Board was also concerned by the aggressive marketing of some synthetic substances, and called upon pharmaceutical companies to show greater concern for the long-term health and well-being of society.

Since it was dependent on the United Nations regular budget and did not accept voluntary contributions from individual countries, the Board was facing a growing gap between increased responsibilities and a declining resources base. Its financial difficulties could prevent it from carrying out its mandated duties effectively.

Mr. GIORGIANNI (Observer for Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the cornerstones of an effective strategy against illicit drugs continued to be the simultaneous fight against demand, production and supply, as well as treatment for drug addicts and effective law enforcement in the areas of drug trafficking, money-laundering and diversion of chemical precursors.

The economy was the new front in the battle against drug trafficking and the organized crime that that fostered, and defence of the economic system must be an integral part of any strategy. The fight against money-laundering was an integral part of the anti-drug policy, because it targeted the fundamental interests of drug trafficking and because money-laundering had distorting effects on economies. The fight against corruption was especially important because corruption undermined the credibility of institutions and hindered legislative initiatives against illicit drug use. Criminal organizations took advantage of political and economic weaknesses to create networks of complicity and corruption. Support for international cooperation in investigations, trials and legal proceedings was, therefore, crucial.

A comprehensive strategy to curb demand would be centred on social policies addressing the reasons for drug addiction and translating that knowledge into primary prevention activities. The European Union attached special importance to the European monitoring centre for drugs and drug addiction, which provided data on epidemiology, demand reduction and documentation.

At the international level, UNDCP played a fundamental role in coordinating initiatives in the fight against drugs. Its coordination role should be further strengthened, along with its cooperation with the Crime Prevention and Criminal

Justice Branch. It had done an excellent job in analysing the needs of individual countries and providing assistance in the establishment of national drug control master plans and the European Union hoped that voluntary contributions would increase, making a more adequate level of resources available for the Programme's crucial tasks.

Mr. BERROCAL SOTO (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that only through an integral and multifaceted international cooperation could the global scourge of drug abuse and the traffic in illicit drugs and psychotropic substances be eradicated. Since the Group of 77 believed that the development of effective drug control action required close international cooperation, it supported the efforts of the United Nations system and the international community towards that end.

For an international strategy to be effective, more accurate information was needed about the economic dimensions of the illicit drug problem and related criminal activities such as money-laundering in developed as well as developing countries. In that regard, pursuant to the recommendations of the International Narcotics Control Board, appropriate agreements should be developed to channel a portion of confiscated drug-related proceeds to the Fund of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme in order to provide more support to poor countries in their fight against the illicit trafficking in and the production and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The international community must be able to monitor the evolution of the global drug problem through a comprehensive, dynamic and continuously updated system of information in order to improve the formulation of prevention and control policies, both at the national and international levels as well as to focus efforts and promote the development of a more effective global strategy against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of drugs.

Alternative development was a priority component in any approach geared to preventing and solving the problems created by illicit drug crops. Indeed, crop substitution should be an integral part of any international strategy against the illicit production, traffic and consumption of drugs. The thematic plans of action jointly prepared by a number of organizations provided a more focused approach to the various dimensions of drug trafficking and demonstrated the enormous potential for international cooperation through the United Nations system.

The Group of 77 hoped that the resolution adopted by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs would be given the appropriate consideration so that a special session would be convened for the purpose, among other things, of proposing practical activities and specific measures to strengthen international cooperation in that field.

Mr. LOZANO GRACIA (Observer for Mexico) said that transnational criminal drug trafficking organizations had become the main threat to his country's national security. His Government had put into place a comprehensive strategy, set forth in its five-year national drug control programme (1995-2000), which was based on the conviction that controlling drugs demanded the participation of both the Government and society. The Government was updating its laws with a view to enhancing its capacity to combat organized crime, money-laundering, the diversion of precursors and arms trafficking. Educational institutions and the mass media were also being used in the efforts to control and reduce drug consumption. International cooperation was a fundamental facet of Mexico's drug control efforts. However, such cooperation should be conducted with full respect for the sovereignty, dignity and territorial jurisdiction of each State. The urgent need for international cooperation in that field had led to the proposal by President Zedillo for the holding of an international meeting on drugs. His Government was encouraged by the support that the proposal had received from the international community.

Implementation of a comprehensive and balanced programme of action required the organizations of the United Nations system, particularly UNDCP and the World Health Organization, to organize a worldwide campaign on the prevention of drug consumption; a renewed commitment of the international community to provide financial support for alternative development programmes that offered viable options to the primary producers of the crops from which illicit drugs were extracted; the restructuring of the regional meetings of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies so as to facilitate and complement a flexible exchange of information that would permit States to combat the criminal organizations more effectively. Also, the United Nations, as the sole global forum, must make a special effort to agree on a uniform international instrument on money-laundering. Given the growing seriousness of the problem of controlling chemical precursors and the production of synthetic drugs, the United Nations could agree on an international cooperation instrument designed to eliminate the

diversion of such substances for illicit purposes. Finally, Member States must give the United Nations the resources to enable it to do its job properly; in particular UNDCP was uniquely equipped to monitor the problem at the global level.

Mr. VARNEY (United Kingdom) said that no country was immune from the impact of drug trafficking and changing trends in drug misuse which were often linked to both violent and acquisitive crime. The response to illicit drugs, both of the international community and of national Governments, must therefore be comprehensive and balanced. Strong action was needed to combat supply and trafficking and to reduce the demand for drugs. Countries also needed effective treatment strategies. His Government had put in place a comprehensive new strategy which maintained a vigorous and concerted effort in the field of enforcement whilst also placing increased emphasis on prevention and treatment, particularly amongst young people. His Government remained firm in its opposition to the legalization of any illicit drug and it would fully enforce all prohibitions provided for in the international drug control conventions.

All States must accede to and fully implement all three United Nations drug control conventions, in particular the 1988 Convention. That involved both the adoption and implementation of strong domestic legislation and policies, including action to stem the flow of drugs at source, and developing to the full the opportunities which the conventions provided for international cooperation.

The United Kingdom strongly supported, both in principle and financially, the leading role played by UNDCP in the international fight against drugs, particularly its regional and subregional approach and its efforts to promote greater focus on drug control issues in all relevant parts of the United Nations system. Alongside the efforts of UNDCP, the recommendations of the Group of Seven's Chemical Action Task Force and Financial Action Task Force had proved particularly valuable in promoting effective international cooperation to prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals and to disrupt the traffickers' money flows.

Rather than contemplating new conventions or institutions efforts should be devoted to increasing the international community's understanding of the complex, different but linked components of the drug problem, ensuring that the mechanisms already in place were used vigorously and effectively, and securing maximum commitment to action by all those concerned with the drugs problem.

Mr. PARDO GARCIA-PEÑA (Colombia) said that while it was universally agreed that an integrated and balanced approach to the problem was needed which would enhance effective cooperation, concrete efforts to that end had been limited. What was needed was a new strategy which would be legitimate, credible and symmetrical in that it would be accepted and implemented by all nations and its costs and benefits would be fairly distributed. A genuine multilateral worldwide strategy must, in order to be effective, be based on technical, not political criteria, and must be constructed with the long-term view in mind.

While it was incumbent on individual States to combat all aspects of illegal drug trafficking and consumption including through the strengthening of legislation, they also had a duty to encourage international cooperation in that area. In that connection, the drug control components of the United Nations system had the potential to treat the problem in a balanced manner and must therefore receive adequate support from Member States.

Colombia had paid an inordinately high price in its efforts to remove the marijuana growers, destroy the Medellin cartel and disband the Cali cartel. All those efforts notwithstanding, the effects of illicit drugs remained the greatest of all the country's evils. The Government intended to complement those successes with greater international cooperation and stronger legislation to combat the cartels. New legislative initiatives were being adopted including heavier fines and longer prison terms against those who organized, promoted, financed or directed criminal organizations.

With regard to money-laundering, legislation would be enacted to permit attachment of the assets used to finance illicit drugs. The State also proposed to extinguish ownership in assets acquired from illicit earnings and to facilitate the enforcement of judgements as a contribution to global efforts to deprive criminals of internationally circulating assets.

The success of those measures, however, would depend on whether the international community tackled other aspects of the problem with equal determination. Drug consumption was on the rise throughout the world and profits from drug-related activities were several times greater than the gross domestic product of countries like Colombia. Tolerance of money-laundering exacerbated the nefarious consequences of narcotic drugs. The commitment given by the countries of the Americas at the Miami Summit to elaborate a hemisphere-wide instrument to combat money-laundering therefore marked a timely initiative.

One of the most effective strategies for reducing the supply of natural and synthetic illicit drugs was more stringent international control of the precursors and chemicals needed for their production. In that regard, the Andean countries and the European Union had established mechanisms to make it more difficult to obtain such materials and had concluded an agreement aimed at establishing effective control over the substances used in the manufacture of illicit drugs.

While the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), the Commission on Narcotics, the current session of the Economic and Social Council and the special session of the General Assembly to be held in 1998 were all valuable instruments for eliminating the scourge of drugs, political will was needed to move the machinery forward. Members of the international community must resist the temptation to blame one another and focus instead on reducing addiction and trafficking.

Mr. ARAOZ (Argentina) said that, in tackling the challenge of illicit drugs, it was essential to recognize that demand and supply were two sides of the same problem and that the solution must necessarily be global. Consumer countries had spent too much time blaming producer countries without reducing their own consumption, while producer countries in turn blamed consuming countries without themselves taking steps to eradicate illicit crops. Emphasis had been placed exclusively on suppression. Only by recognizing the fact that the drug problem reflected the pathology of a society that had lost its way could an international prevention and education system be designed to promote universal awareness of the irreparable damage which drugs caused to people, societies and the security of States.

Argentina had established very strict control over every stage of the marketing of precursors and other essential chemical substances. It was in compliance with the resolutions of the United Nations and the Summit of the Americas, which provided that all countries should characterize money-laundering as a crime, and legislation was also pending for the establishment of a central financial information agency to carry out investigations. Argentina also proposed to lift its banking secrecy laws in the belief that the need to protect the privacy of clients should not take precedence over respect for the law. National financial institutions were required to report all movements of capital in excess of US$ 200,000 per month or US$ 500,000 per year and were not

authorized to pay out cash amounts over US$ 10,000 without prior verification of the origin of the funds in question. Argentina's databases were being connected to those in other parts of the world in order to facilitate the prosecution of international criminals. Unlike certain others, his Government believed that it was wrong to promote development with capital of dubious origins. Capital gained from criminal activity was a corrupting influence, since it increased consumption and threatened the security of legitimate capital.

Argentina was also in the process of establishing a radar system on its borders to prevent illicit drug trafficking and was cooperating with other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean in training personnel in the fields of education, health, security, customs and the judiciary.

Those goals would not be complete, however, without a humanistic vision for the social reintegration of drug-addicted individuals by the State. Legalization of drugs would simply increase consumption without eliminating the mafia which trafficked in illicit drugs. Argentina sought a drug-free society not a society with the freedom to use drugs. In order to achieve that goal, what was needed were deeds and not words, co-responsibility and not blame, international cooperation and not isolationism, optimism and not fatalism.

Mr. ISMAIL (Malaysia) said that the threat posed by drugs must be collectively addressed by the international community by adopting a comprehensive, balanced and multidisciplinary approach.

While Malaysia was not a drug-producing country, it had a domestic drug-abuse problem and was used as a transit point for the onward trafficking of drugs. It was therefore committed to the elimination of that problem through both national efforts and collaboration with the international community.

The inability or unwillingness of authorities to take effective steps to reduce demand was as much responsible for increased trafficking and abuse as the inability or unwillingness of authorities to crack down effectively on cultivation and production. The drug trade thrived on the feebleness of governmental action and the unwillingness of society to firmly manifest its rejection of drug abuse.

At the national level, priority should be given to effective drug rehabilitation programmes, including the reintegration of drug addicts into society. Outreach programmes to prevent drug abuse should include the promotion of healthy activities in the field of sports and culture.

On the supply side, increased international cooperation was needed to monitor and prevent the unimpeded movement of drugs. Such cooperation could be intensified by promoting working relationships between countries and international organizations, developing cooperative programmes with them and enhancing the role of non-governmental organizations in drug abuse prevention programmes and activities.

During the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly, Malaysia was willing in principle to consider measures to increase international cooperation in the application of the law, to adopt and promote drug abuse control programmes and policies, and to develop programmes for the eradication of illicit crops. Drug abuse control programmes and policies to reduce demand for illicit drugs could not succeed, however, without improvements in the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control, enhanced regional cooperation, and increased collaboration between customs authorities and other competent administrations on the one hand and the international trading community, including commercial carriers, on the other.

At the national level, Malaysia's long-term strategy was based on preventive education; promotion of public awareness and community action, manpower development, research and evaluation programmes; preventing the entry of drugs into the country and curtailing its supply within Malaysia through legislation, interdiction at entry points and international enforcement; and international cooperation and more effective coordination at the federal, state and district levels. A national drug database had also been established to help monitor and plan prevention programmes and to promote greater collaboration at the national, regional and international levels.

Mr. VELASCO (Chile) said that Chile's national drug control policy emphasized preventive action aimed at promoting awareness of the impact of substance abuse on the health of individuals and on society, treatment of addicts and their reintegration into society, severe penalties for those convicted of producing or trafficking in drugs, stringent border controls, restriction of access to chemical precursors and prevention of the laundering and use of the proceeds of drug-related activities.

At the international level, Chile's policy was based on the recognition that the task called for close international cooperation. Chile had ratified the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and

Psychotropic Substances and had enacted legislation during the previous year to penalize all criminal activities associated with illicit drugs. Regulations were also in force to facilitate international judicial cooperation, including the exchange of evidence, authorize the release of background materials from confidential preliminary proceedings in criminal cases, and permit the release of banking and financial information for use in investigations being conducted in other countries.

The Chilean judiciary had made a significant contribution to those efforts and its unequivocal position had served as a deterrent to serious crime. International judicial cooperation was provided and requests for extradition were granted provided the relevant legislation was complied with.

For its part, the legislature had approved one of the most comprehensive laws in the region, which penalized all drug-related criminal activities and gave the police and the courts the power to investigate and prosecute offenders while facilitating international judicial cooperation in cases of transnational offences.

The Government assumed responsibility for all activities related to the prevention of drug abuse and the suppression of illicit drug trafficking. Through the National Narcotics Control Council, it executed national drug policies and promoted greater awareness of the problem of drugs within all national institutions. The Council also made recommendations and coordinated the allocation of State resources.

In the area of control of supply, the activities of the competent national agencies were being coordinated and strengthened. Additional resources had been assigned to them, with special emphasis on training. At the international level, close cooperation had been developed with the United Nations Drug Control Programme, which had provided support for the elaboration of a subregional agreement involving Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru under which training was being provided in the areas of prevention and control. His Government was willing to increase its links with the United Nations, and specifically with UNDCP, by making its technical and professional resources available to it for the conduct of new joint projects.

It was a matter of some concern that many countries continued to produce large quantities of drugs, market essential chemicals without any controls and tolerate money-laundering, and that powerful organizations were financing the

illicit production of drugs in third countries with a view to importing them into their own countries. Emphasis must continue to be placed on preventive measures and the treatment and rehabilitation of victims through programmes that enjoyed broad community support.

Mr. NAKAJIMA (Director-General, World Health Organization) said that an estimated 15 million people worldwide incurred a significant risk to health as a result of their use of psychoactive substances other than alcohol and tobacco. The number of drug injectors was also on the rise, particularly in some developing countries, with the attendant risks of HIV transmission, hepatitis and other infections. The health and social consequences of substance abuse were particularly severe for the poor. Drug users and their families were often excluded from society and family violence was often associated with substance abuse. In addition, the proportion of a family's earnings spent on alcohol, tobacco and other substances was greater at lower income levels, thereby taking away resources required to meet basic needs, such as food and housing, and seriously hampering efforts to overcome poverty.

One of the tasks of the World Health Organization (WHO) was to assess psychoactive substances in order to make recommendations to the United Nations concerning their international control and to ensure that international treaty obligations were fulfilled. WHO helped to strengthen the capability of national regulatory agencies through training and the development of regulatory guidelines and methodologies. It also promoted the rational use of controlled medicines by fostering rational prescribing practices and disseminating knowledge about the factors that influenced the use and abuse of psychoactive medicines.

WHO also sought to ensure that the social consequences of substance abuse were taken fully into account in the public health agenda at the national, regional and global levels. It supported member States by strengthening their capacity to prevent and reduce those consequences and by developing guidelines for the continued epidemiological surveillance and assessment of trends in the use of psychoactive substances and its consequences. It also compiled and disseminated periodical reports on substance abuse in member States.

The establishment of easily accessible services that were capable of providing effective and affordable care and social, psychological and educational support to all concerned could only be achieved by strengthening

community-based approaches and primary health care. All health professionals must be trained in methods of diagnosis, early intervention, treatment and referral of cases involving the abuse of psychoactive substances.

Recent changes in attitudes towards substance abuse and in the types and patterns of substance abuse itself had been accelerated by urbanization, poverty, migration and the dispersal of families and communities. Increased access to information and contact with other cultures as a result of the globalization of travel and communication had also played an important part.

Of particular concern were the increase in substance abuse and its changing patterns in developing countries. The downward trend in the use of illicit drugs in many industrialized countries also appeared to be changing. Not only was the use of psychoactive substances increasing but use was starting at an earlier age. In some parts of the world, illicit methamphetamine was now competing with cocaine as a result of the ready availability of precursors and easy access to manufacturing technology.

Success in preventing substance abuse and its related health and social problems depended on the ability of countries to cooperate with each other. Too many social and economic factors were involved for any one national or international entity to tackle on its own. A stronger international focus on demand reduction was required while efforts must also continue to reduce the supply of illicit drugs. For its part, WHO was capable of mobilizing a unique network of health care workers, administrators and scientists to promote cooperation in all countries and communities and within the United Nations system.

Mr. HOYER (Germany) said that drug abuse and drug-related crime posed a threat to the integrity and stability of the entire international economic, financial and political system. The old dichotomy between producer and consumer countries had become irrelevant and obsolete. All countries must share responsibility for tackling every aspect of the drug problem.

The United Nations had responded to the problem with a comprehensive and coherent global strategy in which UNDCP was the initiator, catalyst and coordinator. But despite all efforts, drug abuse, production and trafficking and drug-related organized crime had increased at an alarming rate.

The world's defences against drugs were not functioning effectively because there were too many gaps in the system. Too many countries had not ratified the

United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances or had failed to incorporate its provisions into their national laws. That was partly due to a lack of experience and shortage of institutional and material resources. In such cases, UNDCP and other international organizations could provide effective assistance.

The Programme's work had also been hampered by a steady decline in its financial resources. UNDCP was financed from voluntary contributions by a small number of countries, and he urged all countries in a position to do so to pay contributions.

The issue of repression was a central element in any discussion about drug abuse and drug-related crime, and his delegation wished to highlight two repression strategies that were potentially effective because they went beyond conventional law enforcement. The first was control of precursor chemicals which was designed to cut the drug cartels off from their means of production. The second was directed against money-laundering and aimed at the cartels' profits and influence. In order for those strategies to be effective, all States would have to work together in a spirit of solidarity.

Ultimately, however, repression alone could only produce short-term and partial results; it was equally important to tackle the underlying social causes of the drug problem. Generally speaking, it was grinding poverty and wretched living conditions which made farmers in Asia and Latin America turn to narcotic drugs in order to make a living. The concept of alternative development could make a difference by providing alternative and legal income-generating opportunities for producers of narcotic crops. It entailed a wide range of infrastructure-related measures designed to eradicate the economic and social causes of illicit narcotic crop growing. The approach was supportive rather than confrontational, and with its strong emphasis on poverty reduction, alternative development also squared with the general thrust of development policy.

Alternative development measures required substantial funds. Governments and international organizations must therefore look for new ways of securing a broad and stable financial basis for such a policy. The Council should make a strong appeal to the international community for appropriate funding.

On the question of reducing demand, the problem was how to directly protect the population, above all the young, from drug abuse and its disastrous

consequences. Prevention was the most important but also the most difficult challenge. Since the individual and social reasons for experimenting with and addiction to drugs varied from country to country, a wide range of prevention strategies were needed. However, the ubiquitous increase in drug consumption reflected a deep crisis. Traditional values were everywhere on the decline. Modern media were transmitting messages at odds with the influence and authority of religious institutions, the family and schools. State efforts at prevention must be complemented by the involvement of traditional institutions, and specialized non-governmental organizations had a particular role to play. Modern addiction prevention strategies aimed not just to deter but also to convince by developing people's awareness of what constituted good health. Prevention must start at a very young age and should be continuous, long-term and targeted.

Many of the measures that had been successful in the past were now inadequate to cope with the current scale and type of drug abuse. In particular, amphetamine-like stimulants were posing a very difficult challenge which Governments were ill-equipped to deal with. The United Nations had a substantial role to play in prevention, therapy and rehabilitation. Member States must develop criteria to integrate their demand reduction policies into their economic, social and health policies. The United Nations should be strengthened as a focal point for the collection and dissemination of information, and also for international assistance and solidarity. His delegation therefore welcomed the UNDCP proposal to convene an expert group to draw up a declaration on demand reduction.

Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. COMANESCU (Romania) said that his delegation wished to add some specific comments to the statement made by the Italian delegation on behalf of the European Union. The drug problem had attained a global dimension and was having a widening impact on society at large; international cooperation had become an urgent priority requiring the kind of international action which the United Nations was best suited to take.

Renewed efforts were needed to consolidate present achievements and to make more effective use of the instruments at the disposal of Governments. His Government supported practical measures designed to enable UNDCP to increase its capacity to analyse and disseminate data, provide additional expertise for

action against money-laundering and illicit traffic in precursor chemicals, study the root causes of the drug problem and its economic and social consequences and promote cooperation with other centres of expertise. Policy makers and the international community should be fully aware of the importance and virtues of international cooperation. The drug problem was global and therefore required a global solution.

Since 1989, when Romania had opened its borders and relaxed controls on freedom of movement, the country had witnessed an upsurge of drug-related problems. The outbreak of war in the former Yugoslavia had aggravated the phenomenon by diverting the "Balkan route" of drug trafficking through Romania. Romania had increasingly become a holding area for drugs; an indigenous drug market had also developed. In countries with transitional economies, institutions designed to combat illicit drug trafficking and related criminal activities had only recently been established. Such countries needed special assistance from countries with well-established expertise, especially where the implementation of new legislation was concerned. Romania had benefited from the support of a number of international organizations in its fight against the drug menace, and was ready to participate in all forms of international cooperation.

Drugs could only be successfully dealt with by mobilizing political will and providing adequate financial and human resources. Special attention should also be devoted to preventive activities.

Ms. WALLSTRÖM (Sweden) said that in order to solve the drug problem, the international community needed to focus on every link of the drugs chain that stretched from producer to consumer. The problem was therefore multifaceted and could only be addressed effectively if international and national efforts were successfully combined.

Although a number of young people had experimented with or used drugs on a regular basis, the overwhelming majority chose not to use drugs. The goal of Swedish State policy was to make the country a drug-free society in which rejection of narcotics was the norm.

The normative aspects of multilateral cooperation to combat drugs were sound; the problem lay in ratification and implementation. Moreover, many countries urgently needed technical cooperation, which was a sadly neglected area of activity. It was incumbent on all multilateral organizations to give drug control a much higher priority. UNDCP had a special role to play in that

area. The Programme had several advantages over bilateral efforts, namely that it was free from national interests, it could act at the global as well as the regional level, and it had a reputation for expertise. However, to a large extent donors used the Programme for their bilateral programmes, thus compromising UNDCP's neutrality and ensuring that no general-purpose funds would be available for long-term activities or policy development. It was therefore incumbent on Member States to allocate sufficient resources to UNDCP, thereby strengthening it as an organization.

The Secretary-General's report had pointed out that 90 per cent of voluntary contributions to the Programme came from seven Governments and the European Commission, and that 60 per cent of general-purpose contributions were borne by just three countries, of which Sweden was one. The reason for the imbalance was lack of effective governance. Like so many other United Nations organizations, UNDCP needed to be reformed in order to place its financing on a more stable footing.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.